

grams, history courses with a research focus, one- or two-credit historical bibliographical courses, graduate library courses, and independent or general study courses as appropriate settings.

*Materials & Methods for History Research* is a solid contribution to the literature of library instruction. It is comprehensive in scope, excellent in design and execution, and easy to use. Furthermore, it exposes students to a large number of sources and clearly relates the materials to the method. The authors are to be commended for their work.—*Daniel F. Ring, Oakland University, Rochester, Michigan.*

**SPINDEX Users Conference.** Proceedings of a Meeting Held at Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, March 31 and April 1, 1978. Edited by H. Thomas Hickerson. Ithaca, N.Y.: Dept. of Manuscripts and University Archives, Cornell University Libraries, 1979. 125p. \$5. LC 79-53690. (Available from: Office of Budget and Accounting, 234 Olin Library, Cornell University Libraries, Ithaca, NY 14853.)

Among the reasons for libraries to participate actively in OCLC, RLIN, and other automated data bases is the desire of reducing cataloging costs while simultaneously making new acquisitions more quickly accessible. Compared to libraries, however, archives have seemed to respond much more slowly to the challenge of providing improved access through automation. Due more to a lack of resources than to a lack of initiative, as well as the problem that costs cannot be shared given the uniqueness of archival and manuscript material, some repositories have nevertheless tried to develop alternatives to a manual system.

Of the systems developed to date, SPINDEX (Selective Permutation Indexing) is the best known. Designed originally in the mid-1960s at the National Archives and Records Service (NARS) to facilitate intellectual control over archival holdings, it was to serve also as a possible foundation for a national data base of information. As with earlier systems, the latest version, SPINDEX III, is available from NARS. In addition to producing finding aids, SPINDEX III has the capacity for being hierarchical in

nature with up to eight distinct levels for input. Thus a repository may choose to identify a collection only by using the first level, or if a collection warrants more detail, it can provide item description at the last level.

In the spring of 1978, a SPINDEX Users Conference convened at Cornell University to exchange information about the system. So that the information could be disseminated more broadly, an edited version of the proceedings was prepared for publication. In addition to appendixes, this volume contains the presentations of representatives from seven different organizations. The papers are arranged in the order in which they were given at the six major sessions of the meeting. The topics range in scope from current applications and the future to technical aspects of SPINDEX use and designing tag structures.

The volume will prove of particular interest to individuals who are considering the possible adoption of SPINDEX at their institutions. According to the comments made at the Cornell conference, this system appears to have a high degree of flexibility. It has been applied not only to certain collections in the Cornell University Archives and the South Carolina Department of Archives and History but also in private organizations such as the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints and, on a limited scale, in businesses. Further the form of material placed in the system so far includes archival records, photographs, maps, and select publications. SPINDEX also allows for subject access through the use of locally prepared thesauri that institutions can develop to meet their respective needs and programs.

Despite the informational nature of the volume, it suffers from unevenness in certain areas. Instead of the comparatively large amount of space given to the history of Public Utility Districts in the Pacific Northwest that appeared in one of the papers, a brief history of SPINDEX, in an introduction to the volume, would be more beneficial to potential users and other interested parties.

Admittedly, these proceedings resulted from a gathering of users who were familiar with the intricacies of SPINDEX. In pub-

lished form, however, the volume should have contained at least some background information for the uninitiated who wish to acquire a more complete knowledge of automated systems in archives. The table of contents also should be paginated in more detail.

Such criticisms should not detract from the overall value of the work, especially since it helps to elucidate some of the applications, as well as some of the problems, of the SPINDEX system in archival repositories.—James W. Geary, *Kent State University, Kent, Ohio*.

Tymn, Marshall B.; Zahorski, Kenneth J.; and Boyer, Robert H. *Fantasy Literature: A Core Collection and Reference Guide*. New York: Bowker, 1979. 273p. \$14.95 plus shipping and handling. LC 79-1533. ISBN 0-8352-1153-3.

This work "is intended to serve . . . as an acquisitions tool for librarians building core fantasy collections; as a guide to the literature for teachers; as a reference handbook for fantasy scholars and researchers; and as a comprehensive introduction to the literature of fantasy and its related activities for interested readers." Unfortunately, it falls short of the mark much of the time.

The opening chapter, "On Fantasy," attempts to define fantasy literature and its subsections in fairly rigid terms. The authors admit to exceptions; but rather than admit that an academic attempt to bring order to a fairly chaotic literature is at best a tentative working model, they play word games that at times attempt to hammer the exceptions into line with the definitions.

The chapter "Fantasy Scholarship" is quite thorough in its listings, but when I am ego-gratifyingly but inaccurately described as "America's foremost map scholar and librarian" one wonders at the correctness of the other brief annotations.

One can't argue with the listings of periodicals, fantasy societies, and literary awards (with winners over the years). The list of fantasy collections in the U.S. and Canada is useful but far from complete. The directory of publishers is thorough. The index is good.

Fortunately, this book is saved from triviality by the excellent "Core Collection" list,

which represents most of the work. While one can argue with the selection of authors, titles, and even with the selection of collections and editions cited, the annotations are extensive, detailed, thorough, and good—most of the time. Plot, theme, and character are discussed in detail, making this extremely useful to teachers who haven't read the stories. Based on *British Books in Print* 1978, the listing of British editions of works cited in the "Core Collection" enhances the utility to U.K. libraries.

Though this is far from the comprehensive and definitive work claimed by the authors and publisher, it is a very useful listing of works in the genre of fantasy and should be in all large libraries. When used with a book like Diana Waggoner's *Hills of Faraway* (Atheneum, 1978), *Fantasy Literature* can provide a solid basic collection list. When taken with a healthy disrespect for its definitions of the parts of fantasy, it can even provide some meaningful insights into an increasingly important literary genre. Whatever the faults of this work, any final evaluation must be positive if for no other reason than the thoroughness of the extensive annotations.—J. B. Post, *Free Library of Philadelphia, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania*.

*Libraries in Society: A Reader*. Edited by David Gerard. London: Clive Bingley; New York: K. G. Saur, 1979. 163p. \$13.25 ISBN 0-85157-260-X Bingley.

This collection of fifteen essays, written between 1881 and the present, is brought together in an effort to reevaluate the role of the library in society. While there is a definite British emphasis in the chosen articles, there are also contributions by Americans, a South African, and an Australian. The last article, written especially for this publication by two Russian scholars, attempts to define the role of the library in modern Russian society. In addition, there is an introductory article by the editor and a brief preface to each article that provides a general philosophical statement and identifies the author.

The spotlight is mainly on the public library, but one of the longer essays deals with the function of the university library and its role in the university community. About half the selections are by librarians